

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HALIFA 00368 040309Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
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P 031810Z AUG 77
FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1758
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
CANADIAN CONGENS (VIA POUCH)

UNCLAS HALIFAX 0368

E O 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB CA
SUBJECT: VERY CIVIL--BUT VERY EFFECTIVE--DISOBEDIENCE
REF: HALIFAX 0342 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER ILLEGALLY BUT PEACEFULLY OCCUPYING THREE
FEDERAL BUILDINGS FOR PERIODS OF 48 HOURS OR LESS,
AND BEFORE IT WAS FORCED TO MOVE INTO "PHASE TWO"
OF ITS CAMPAIGN OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, THE CAPE
BRETON"COMMITTEE OF CONCERN FOR THE UNEMPLOYED"
HAS ACHIEVED ITS GOAL: IT HAS FORCED OTTAWA TO AGREE
TO SEND A HIGH-RANKING FEDERAL OFFICIAL TO CAPE BRETON
TO LISTEN TO THE COMMITTEE'S PROPOSALS FOR JOB CREATION
ON THAT ISLAND PORTION OF NOVA SCOTIA. PRIVY COUNCIL
PRESIDENT ALLAN MACEACHEN HAS AGREED TO MEET WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON AN AS-YET-UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE.
2. REPORTING OFFICER SPOKE ABOUT UPCOMING MACEACHEN
VISIT TO CAPE BRETON WITH GERALD YETMAN, PRESIDENT OF
NS FEDERATION OF LABOR. YETMAN SAID THAT CAPE BRETONERS
WERE "DAMNED SICK AND TIRED" OF GOING TO OTTAWA AND
RETURNING HOME EMPTY-HANDED. FEELING HAS GROWN
THAT OTTAWA REPRESENTATIVE MUST COME TO THEM AND MUST SEE
CONDITIONS ON CAPE BRETON ISLAND AT FIRST HAND. COMMITTEE
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NOT WILLING SPELL OUT IN DETAIL SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IT WILL
PUT TO MACEACHEN WHEN HE COMES BUT IT IS UNDERSTOOD
THAT THEY WILL RECOMMEND JOB CREATION THRU OPENING OF
NEW COAL MINES BY CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,
THRU MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION OF SYDNEY STEEL
CORPORATION, AND THRU INTENSIVE EFFORT OVER COMING YEARS
TO HARVEST BEFORE THEY ROT TREES KILLED BY SPRUCE BUDWORM.

3. COMMENT: THE CAPE BRETON COMMITTEE OF CONCERN FOR THE UNEMPLOYED--WHETHER IT ACKNOWLEDGES IT OR NOT--OWES A GREAT DEAL TO SUCH PIONEERS IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AS MOHANDAS K GANDHI AND MARTIN LUTHER KING. THERE SEEMS TO BE A GROWING ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA THAT, PROVIDED THE ENDS ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED PRAISEWORTHY, ANY NON-VIOLENT MEANS TO ACHIEVE THOSE ENDS ARE ACCEPTABLE. AND SINCE ARREST FOR ILLEGAL ACTS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE SEEMS TO MAKE THE ARRESTEE SOME SORT OF "INSTANT MARTYR" (AS BOTH GANDHI AND KING WERE WELL AWARE), CIVIL AUTHORITIES NOWADAYS SEEM TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO AVOID TAKING OVERT ACTION AGAINST PARTICIPANTS IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGNS.

4. PUBLICITY, OF COURSE, IS A NECESSARY INGREDIENT IN THE MIX. THE COMMITTEE HAS PUBLICIZED ITS ACTIVITIES VERY SKILLFULLY, RECEIVING COVERAGE ON NATIONAL TV AS WELL AS HEAVY LOCAL COVERAGE. IT NOW SEEMS THAT OTTAWA MAY BE ON THE DEFENSIVE AND THAT MILITANT CAPE BRETONERS MAY, WITH LUCK, BE ABLE TO TWIST THE RIGHT SCREWS TO GET EVEN MORE FEDERAL FUNDS COMMITTED TO AN ISLAND WHICH IS ALREADY BEING SUPPORTED IN LARGE MEASURE BY PUBLIC FUNDS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER THE COMMITTEE WILL PUT FORWARD WELL-THOUGHT-OUT SCHEMES WITH SOME ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION TO THEM

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OR MERELY MAKE-WORK BOONDOGGLES WHICH WILL DO NOTHING TO RESOLVE THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS OF CAPE BRETON.

END COMMENT

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